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THE INTERPRETATION OF THE FLOOD STORY IN THE BOOK OF JUBILEES

J.T.A.G.M. VAN RUITEN

In this contribution to the interpretation of the biblical story of the Flood, I shall confine myself to the rewriting and interpretation of the story in the Book of Jubilees. This book was written in the middle of the second century BCE,¹ and was presented as a revelation which Moses received at Mount Sinai. It actually consists of a rewriting and interpretation of the biblical narrative from Genesis 1 to Exodus 16. It strongly resembles the fragmentarily preserved *Genesis Apocryphon* and the *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* of Pseudo-Philo. It corresponds to the biblical text very closely, but sometimes it appears that the author feels free to deviate considerably from his example.

In order to get a clear picture of the specific way the biblical story was rewritten, the following methodological steps should be taken.² Firstly, one should establish which *Hebrew biblical text* the author had in front of him when he composed his book. In this article, I cannot elaborate this first step extensively. Therefore, I confine myself

¹ For a discussion see, e.g. R.H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees or the Little Genesis. Translated from the Editor's Ethiopic Text* (London, 1902) lvii–lxvi; G.L. Davenport, *The Eschatology of the Book of Jubilees* [SPB 20] (Leiden, 1971) 10–18; J.C. VanderKam, *Textual and Historical Studies in the Book of Jubilees* (Missoula, 1977) 214–285; G.W.E. Nickelsburg, *Jewish Literature Between the Bible and the Mishnah. A Historical and Literary Introduction* (London, 1981) 78; K. Berger, *Das Buch der Jubiläen* [JSHRZ V.3] (Gütersloh, 1981) 298–300; O.S. Wintermute, “Jubilees. A New Translation and Introduction”, in J.H. Charlesworth (ed.), *The Old Testament Pseudepigrapha, II* (London 1985) 43–44; E. Schürer, *The History of the Jewish People in the Age of Jesus Christ (175 BC–AD 135). Volume III.1. Revised and Edited by G. Vermes, F. Millar and M. Goodman* (Edinburgh, 1986) 308–318.

² Research on biblical interpretation in Jubilees, as far as Jub 19–45 is concerned, has been done by J.C. Endres, *Biblical Interpretation in the Book of Jubilees* [CBQMS 18] (Washington, 1987). On pp. 16–17 he sketches the following methodological framework: 1. isolation of elements of the biblical tradition which can be achieved through a synoptic viewing of pertinent sections; 2. identification of Haggadic elements which derive from non-biblical texts; 3. discerning the compositional techniques and tendencies. See the critical review of Endres' book by M. Fishbane, *JBL* 107 (1988) 526–528. See also: J.C. VanderKam, “Biblical Interpretation in 1 Enoch and Jubilees”, in J.H. Charlesworth – C.A. Evans (eds.), *The Pseudepigrapha and Early Biblical Interpretation* [JSPSS 14] (Sheffield, 1993) 96–125.

to one problem, viz. the chronology of the Flood. Secondly, I will *compare* the relevant passages of the Book of Jubilees and Genesis. When comparing the texts, I will give a *classification* of the dissimilarities. I will use the following categories: omission, addition, variation in sequence, and difference other than addition, omission or variation in sequence. Firstly, I shall give an overall comparison between both texts. Secondly, I shall *analyse* some of the dissimilarities in more detail. It is not always clear whether the differences should be attributed to certain exegetical techniques of the author, to certain traditional elements (Haggadic or Halachic from biblical and non-biblical sources) which exert influence on the Book of Jubilees, or to tendencies of the author or the group he is involved in. In this way I hope to draw a picture of the hermeneutical presuppositions of the author of Jubilees and of the specific way in which he rewrote the biblical story of the Flood.

1. *The Type of Hebrew Biblical Text*

Before comparing the relevant passages of Jubilees and Genesis, I shall briefly examine the first methodological step: which type of Hebrew biblical text did the author of Jubilees have in front of him when he composed his book.³ What is his *Vorlage*? It is very difficult to determine this biblical text, because the textual tradition of the Bible was multiform by the time that Jubilees was written. There was no standardized text of the Bible as yet.⁴ Besides, the Book of Jubilees is neither a translation nor a copy of the biblical book of Genesis. It is a rewriting. Within the genre of the "rewritten Bible"⁵ some elements may be (literally) adapted, but others may be omitted

³ For this problem see especially VanderKam, *Textual and Historical Studies*, 103–198.

⁴ See A.S. van der Woude, *Pluriformiteit en uniformiteit. Overwegingen betreffende de tekstoverlevering van het Oude Testament* (Kampen, 1992); cf. also studies on textual criticism: R.W. Klein, *Textual Criticism of the Old Testament. From the Septuagint to Qumrân* (Philadelphia, 1974); S. Talmon, "The Old Testament Text", in P.R. Ackroyd – C.F. Evans (eds.), *The Cambridge History of the Bible, I* (Cambridge, 1976) 159–199; F.E. Deist, *Towards the Text of the Old Testament* (Pretoria, 1981²); J. Weingreen, *Introduction to the Text of the Hebrew Bible* (Oxford/New York, 1982); E. Würthwein, *Der Text des Alten Testaments* (Stuttgart, 1988³); E. Tov, *Textual Criticism of the Hebrew Bible* (Assen/Minneapolis, 1992).

⁵ The term "rewritten Bible" was introduced by G. Vermes, *Scripture and Tradition in Judaism. Haggadic Studies* [SPB 4] (Leiden, 1973²) 67–126. C. Perrot – P.-M. Bogaert, *Pseudo-Philon: Les Antiquités Bibliques, II* [SC 230] (Paris, 1976) 22–28, speak about "texte continué".

or transformed. The author may also add his own elements. Each time we must determine whether we are dealing with an alteration to the *Vorlage* or with an accurate reproduction of the biblical text which the author had before him.⁶

The Duration of the Flood

I would like to give one example, viz., the duration of the Flood, to illustrate the problem with the determination of the type of the Hebrew biblical text.⁷ It is just a detail, but it illustrates some of the difficulties which are encountered when the text of Jubilees is compared with the text of Genesis.

According to the Masoretic text (MT), the Flood lasted *one year and ten days*. It began on the *seventeenth* day of the second month in the six hundredth year of Noah's life (Gen 7:11) and it ended on the *twenty-seventh* day of the second month in the six hundred and first year (Gen 8:14). According to Jubilees, however, the Flood lasted exactly *one year*. Both the beginning and the end of the Flood took place on the seventeenth day of the second month (see Jub 5:23, 31b). According to the Septuagint (LXX), too, the Flood lasted exactly one year. However, according to the Greek translator the Flood began and ended not on the seventeenth of the second month, but on the twenty-seventh of that month. What did the writer of Jubilees 5:31b read in his *Vorlage* (Gen 8:14): seventeen or twenty-seven?

Most commentators assume that the numbers in MT are the original ones, whereas the numbers in LXX and Jubilees are adaptations

⁶ The textual history of the Book of Jubilees also plays a part. The preserved Ethiopic version is a translation of a Greek translation of the Hebrew original. There have been exegetes who defended the hypothesis of a gradual alteration of the biblical citations in the Book of Jubilees. The Greek translator of the original Hebrew text adapted the biblical text to the text with which he was familiar, probably the Septuagint, whereas the Ethiopic translator adapted the Greek translation to the Ethiopic translation of the Old Testament. However, the discovery in Qumran of some fragments of Jubilees in Hebrew shows that the Ethiopic version is a reliable translation of the original Hebrew text. For an extensive discussion see VanderKam, *Textual and Historical Studies*, 103–198.

⁷ For this example see especially R.S. Hendel, "4Q252 and the Flood Chronology of Genesis 7–8. A Text-Critical Solution" *DSD* 2 (1995) 72–79. Cf. also T.H. Lim, "The Chronology of the Flood Story in a Qumran Text (4Q252)", *JJS* 43 (1992) 288–298; U. Glessmer, "Antike und moderne Auslegungen des Sintflutberichtes Gen 6–8 und der Qumran-Pesher 4Q252", *Mitteilungen und Beiträge* (Theologische Fakultät Leipzig Forschungstelle Judentum) 6 (1993) 3–79; M.J. Bernstein, "4Q252. From Re-Written Bible to Biblical Commentary", *JJS* 45 (1994) 1–27 (esp. pp. 5–9).

which came into being independently.⁸ A commonly held opinion is that the priestly writer or redactor changed “the seventeenth of the second month” in Gen 8:14 into “the twenty-seventh of the second month” in order to assimilate the text to a new calendar. The old calendar of 354 days was replaced by a calendar of 364 days.⁹ In the opinion of P, therefore, the Flood would have lasted exactly one year according to a solar calendar.¹⁰ In this opinion the adaptation in LXX and Jubilees shows that these writers understood the intention of P, namely that the duration of the Flood was exactly one year according to the solar calendar (beginning and ending on the same day).¹¹ According to Jaubert and others, this was the proof that the solar calendar was in use in priestly circles at the end of the First Temple period.¹² This provides the origin of the solar calendar referred to in 1 Enoch, Jubilees and in Qumran literature.¹³

Hendel has rightly expressed doubts about this explanation.¹⁴ It is hard to imagine why anyone would add ten days to a year in order to correct the chronology of a year in a different calendar.¹⁵ In the absence of specific data, the duration from the seventeenth of the second month of a certain year to the twenty-seventh of the second month of the next year is ten days more than a year according to any calendar.¹⁶ Hendel suggests a solution from the perspective of textual criticism to explain the differences in chronology between

⁸ J. de Fraine, *Genesis* [BOT] (Roermond, 1963) 91; A. van Selms, *Genesis. deel I* [POT] (Nijkerk, 1967) 114, 119; W.H. Gispen, *Genesis I, Gen 1–11:26* [COT] (Kampen, 1974) 271; C. Westermann, *Genesis. I. Teilband Genesis 1–11* [BKAT I/1] (Neukirchen-Vluyn, 1974) 581–582.

⁹ This opinion can already be found in Midrash Genesis Rabbah 33:7 (“Now should not Scripture have said, ‘On the sixteenth day of the month, was the earth dry’: why then is it stated, ‘And in the second month, on the seven and twentieth day of the month, was the earth dry’? Because of the eleven days by which the solar year exceeds the lunar year”). Cf. also Rashi, Ibn Ezra, Qimhi and modern commentators.

¹⁰ Westermann, 582.

¹¹ Hendel, “4Q252”, 74.

¹² A. Jaubert, “Le calendrier des Jubilés et de la secte de Qumrân: Ses origines bibliques”, *VT* 3 (1953) 250–264; – *The Date of the Last Supper* (Staten Island NY, 1965) 31–52; cf. also J.C. VanderKam, “The Origin, Character, and Early History of the 364-Day Calendar. A Reassessment of Jaubert’s Hypothesis”, *CBQ* 41 (1979) 390–411; – “2 Maccabees 6,7a and Calendrical Change in Jerusalem”, *JSS* 12 (1981) 52–74.

¹³ Cf. Hendel, “4Q252”, 74.

¹⁴ Cf. Hendel, “4Q252”, 75.

¹⁵ Cf. also Lim, “Notes”, 125.

¹⁶ Cf. Hendel, *ibidem*.

MT, LXX and Jubilees (and 4Q252).¹⁷ He proposes the suggestion that the variations between the numbers seventeen and twenty-seven are caused by a combination of two lapses: firstly a word misdivision,¹⁸ and secondly haplography, the erroneous omission of one or two adjacent letters or words which are identical or similar.¹⁹ These errors, which occur quite often in the transmission of ancient texts, could explain the LXX Gen 7:11 and the MT and LXX Gen 8:14.

The relevant text of MT Gen 7:11 reads *בשבעה עשר יום* ("on the seventeenth day"). This reading occurs not only in MT Gen 7:11, but also in Jub 5:23c, in 4Q252, the Samaritan Pentateuch, and other versions with the exception of LXX. A retranslation of LXX Gen 7:11 (ἐβδόμη καὶ εἰκάδι = "on the twenty-seventh") produces *בשבעה ועשרים* as the possible *Vorlage*. It is possible that a scribe in the pre-Masoretic stage, or perhaps the Greek translator himself, misread *יום עשר* as *ועשרים*. The evidence for this error is the absence of the word for "day(s)" (ἡμέρα) in the LXX. Only here and in LXX Gen 8:4, 14 is there no equivalent for the Hebrew *יום*. The other 147 times the word occurs in the Book of Genesis, the LXX does have an equivalent. The scribal error that changed *יום עשר* to *ועשרים* consists of a word misdivision (writing or seeing two words as one) and a haplography of the ך and ן which were very similar in many periods of Hebrew script. Therefore, it is likely that the original reading is *יום בשבעה עשר* ("on the seventeenth day") from which *בשבעה ועשרים* ("on the twenty-seventh") derives.²⁰ The same situation also occurs in Gen 8:4, but there is no equivalent in Jubilees as far as the date is concerned.

In Gen 8:14, the situation is more complicated. The date in Jub 5:31 ("on the seventeenth day") presupposes the reading as in MT Gen 7:11 *בשבעה עשר יום*.²¹ This reading could have been the *Vorlage* for LXX Gen 8:14 which, in the same way as in Gen 7:11 and

¹⁷ Cf. Hendel, "4Q252", 76–79.

¹⁸ The boundaries of words were not always well indicated in the early stages of the textual transmission. See Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 209 et passim.

¹⁹ See Tov, *Textual Criticism*, 237 et passim.

²⁰ Although I think that Hendel's suggestion is plausible, we cannot entirely rule out the possibility that we are dealing with a combination of dittography, the erroneous doubling of a letter, letters, word, or words, and the splitting of one word into two. In that case the original reading should have been *בשבעה ועשרים* ("on the twenty-seventh") from which *יום בשבעה עשר* ("on the seventeenth day") derives. Cf. also Glessmer, "Antike und Moderne Auslegungen", 42 (note 82).

²¹ This reading is also preserved in 4Q252, column 2, line 1.

8:4, is corrected to *בשבעה ועשרים* ("on the twenty-seventh"). It seems that MT 8:14 (and most of the versions) has suffered the same type of scribal error. The original *עשר יום* (preserved in Jub 5:31 and 4Q252) became first *עשרים* (preserved in LXX). In the Masoretic transmission, the text was secondarily corrected with the word *יום*, possibly as a result of a prior dittography of the ending of *עשרים*. According to Hendel, the textual development could have been as follows: *יום עשר* > *עשרים* > *יום עשרים*. I think the suggested textual development may be correct as far as MT and LXX are concerned. It gives a plausible explanation for the "twenty-seventh day" in MT Gen 8:14 and for the differences in LXX Gen 7:11; 8:4, 14.

Does it also mean that Jub 5:31 preserves a more original reading of Gen 8:14 than MT? If this is true, the different date in Jubilees is not an alteration or interpretation of the *Vorlage*, but an accurate reproduction of it. However, I wonder whether the proposition that Jub 5:31 goes back to a *Vorlage* which is different from MT, is correct. Although the text of Jub 5:31 runs parallel with Gen 8:14 (with the exception of the day of the month), it is undeniable that in Jub 5:32 it is stated that Noah opened the ark *on the twenty-seventh day* of the same month. Therefore, it is probable that the author of Jubilees had a text of Gen 8:14 in front of him which was the same as that preserved in MT. However, the author of Jubilees had a problem with this date. According to contemporary sources, the Flood had lasted exactly one year.²² He solves this problem not by deleting the twenty-seventh day in Gen 8:14, but by stating that Noah opened the ark on the twenty-seventh day of the second month, but that the earth was already dry on the seventeenth of that month. In Genesis, the opening of the ark does occur after the drying up of the earth, but it does not have a date. Therefore, it seems to me inaccurate to suppose that Jub 5:31b preserves a more original reading of Gen 8:14 than MT. The author of Jubilees is only trying to solve the chronological problem in the text of Genesis. He is harmonizing the biblical text of his *Vorlage* and contemporary sources with each other. The activity of harmonization is one of the characteristics of the rewriting in the Book of Jubilees.²³

²² As we have seen, according to the LXX the Flood took place from the twenty-seventh until the twenty-seventh of the second month. According to 4Q252 the Flood took place from the seventeenth until the seventeenth. And 1 Enoch 106:15 states: "and there shall be a deluge and a great destruction for one year".

²³ See below. Cf. Endres, *Biblical Interpretation*, 221–222; J.T.A.G.M. van Ruiten,

With this digression at the beginning of my contribution, I have tried to show the difficulties in comparing Jubilees with the biblical text because of the uncertainty of the biblical text the author had in front of him.

2. *An Overall Comparison of Genesis 6:1–8:19 with Jubilees 5:1–32*

The second methodological step is a *comparison* of the biblical story of the Flood with that in the Book of Jubilees. The story occurs especially in Jubilees 5–6. In addition to this, an anticipation of the Flood occurs in the vision of Enoch in Jubilees 4 (vv. 15, 19, 22–24), and in Jub 7:20–25 and Jub 10:1–7 the author refers back to this. These texts emphasize the causes of the Flood.

The following scheme should facilitate an overall comparison between Jub 5–6 and Gen 6–9. I have arranged the story of the Flood according to the content. I have used the final form of the text and I have left a discussion of the Jahwistic and Priestly versions of the story out of account.²⁴

Genesis 6:1–4		Jubilees 5:1–19	
6:1–2, 4	Sons of God x daughters of men = mighty men	1–3	Motivation: angels x daughters of men = 1. giants; 2. injustice
6:3	Judgement?	4–11	Judgement/punishment
Genesis 6:5–8:19			a. people (4–5) + rescue of Noah
6:5–13	Motivation, decision to bring the Flood, decision to save Noah		b1. angels (6)
	a. motivation (6:5, 11, 12, 13c)		c. giants (7–9)
	b. decision (6:6–7, 13a–b, d)	12	b2. angels (10–11)
	c. rescue of Noah (6:8)		A new nature
	[d. framework (6:9–10)]	13–18	The (coming) judgement
			1. 13–16
			[2. 17–18: to the children of Israel: Yom Kippur]
		19	Decision to rescue Noah

²⁴ “The Rewriting of Exodus 24:12–18 in Jubilees 1:1–4”, *Biblische Notizen* 79 (1995) 25–29; id., “The Garden of Eden and Jubilees 3:1–31”, *Bijdragen* 57 (1996) 305–317.

²⁴ See the contribution by E. Noort in this volume. For an examination of some modern attempts to defend the unity of the Flood, see: J.A. Emerton, “An Examination

(Table cont.)

		Jubilees 5:20–32	
6:14–7:5	Order to build the ark + order to load	20	Decision to bring the Flood
	a. order (6:14)	21	Order to build the ark (I/1, cf. 7:25)
	b. structure and measurements of the ark (6:15–16)	22	Execution of order
	c. decision + rescue (6:17–18a)		
	d. order to enter the ark + order to load (6:18b–21; 7:1–4)		
7:6–24	e. execution of the order to build the ark (6:22–7:5)		
	Entrance into the ark and beginning of the Flood	23	Entrance into the ark + closing (II/1–16 + 17)
	a. entrance (7:7–9)	24–28	The Flood
	b. opening fountains and windows (7:11)		a. opening fountains and windows (24)
	c. coming of the waters (7:6, 7b, 10, 12, 17a)		b. coming of the waters (25)
	d. entrance and closing (7:13–16)		c. prevailing of the waters (26)
	e. prevailing of the waters (7:17b–20)		d. waters prevailed 150 days (27)
	f. destruction of all flesh save Noah (7:21–23)		e. resting of the ark (28)
	g. waters prevailed 150 days (7:24)		
	End of the Flood	29–31	End of the Flood
8:1–14	a. remembering of God + wind		a. closing fountains and windows (29ab) [IV] (IV/1 cf. 7:26)
	b. closing fountains and windows (8:2)		b. opening of the mouths (29c) [VII/1]
	c. subsiding of the waters (8:1c, 3, 5a)		c. subsiding of the waters (29d)
	d. resting of the ark (8:4)		d. the tops of the mountains become visible (30a) [X/1]
	e. the tops of the mountains become visible (8:5b)		

of Some Attempts to Defend the Unity of the Flood Narrative in Genesis”, *VT* 37 (1987) 401–420; 38 (1988) 1–21. However, the genesis of the story seems to be of no interest to the author of Jubilees.

(Table cont.)

	f. opening of the window and sending of raven and dove (8:6–12, 13bc)		e. appearance the earth (30b) [I/1]
	g. waters dried up (8:13a, d)		f. the water dried up (31a)
	h. earth dry (8:14)		g. earth dry (31b) [II/17]
8:15–19	Leaving of the ark	32	Leaving of the ark [II/27]
	a. order to leave (8:15–17)		
	b. the actual leaving (8:18–19)		
8:20–22	Offering by Noah and re- action of YHWH	1–4	Offering by Noah and reac- tion of the Lord

Jubilees 6:1–38

Genesis 9:1–17

9:1–7	The prohibition on eating flesh from a living animal	5–16	The prohibition on eating flesh from a living animal and covenant
9:8–17	Covenant	17–31	The feast of Shebuot
		32–38	Calendar

As far as the content is concerned, most parts of the biblical account of the Flood also occur in the rendering of Jubilees: the motivation (Gen 6:5–13; Jub 5:1–19), the order to build the ark (Gen 6:14–7:5; Jub 5:20–22), the entrance (Gen 7:7–9, 13–16; Jub 5:23), the Flood, from the opening of the fountains until the prevailing of the waters (Gen 7:6, 7b, 10–12, 17–24; Jub 5:24–28), and the closing of the fountains and the end of the Flood (Gen 8:1–14; Jub 5:29–31), and finally the leaving of the ark (Gen 8:15–19; Jub 5:32) and the reactions (Gen 8:20–9:17; Jub 6:1–38).

Although the story runs parallel in both texts, there are also differences. It is striking that the story in Jub 5:1–19 strongly emphasizes the *motivation* of the Flood. In Jubilees, the motivation of Gen 6:5–13 is connected with the text immediately preceding the story of the Flood, Gen 6:1–4, the story of the intercourse of the sons of God with the daughters of men. In addition, a great deal of attention is paid to the *consequences* of the story. Not only the offering of Noah and the commandment to Noah (the prohibition on eating flesh from a living animal) in connection with the covenant are described, but also two elaborations are added, one concerning the feast of Shebuot (Jub 6:17–31), and one concerning the calendar (Jub 6:32–38). The nature of the elaboration in Jub 6:17–38 makes

it clear that the author of Jubilees is to be found in priestly circles.²⁵

Much less attention is paid to the story itself. The order to build the ark and the execution of it takes only two verses (Jub 5:21–22),²⁶ whereas the MT uses seven verses (Gen 6:14–18a, 22; 7:5;). The entrance into the ark and the beginning of the Flood are described in just five verses (Jub 5:23–28),²⁷ whereas the MT uses twenty-five verses (Gen 6:18b–21; 7:1–4, 6–24). The end of the Flood, the drying of the earth, and the leaving of the ark take only four verses (Jub 5:29–32),²⁸ whereas the MT uses nineteen verses (Gen 8:1–19). Elements which are *omitted* entirely by the author of Jubilees are the repentance of God (Gen 6:5–7),²⁹ the structure and the measurements of the ark (Gen 6:15–16),³⁰ the order to enter into the ark and to

²⁵ Cf. J.C. VanderKam, “The Righteousness of Noah”, in J.J. Collins - G.W.E. Nickelsburg (eds.), *Ideal Figures in Ancient Judaism. Profiles and Paradigms* [SBLSCS 12] (Chico CA, 1980) 20–21.

²⁶ All quotations in this article from the Ethiopic Text of Jubilees are from J.C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees, II* [CSCO 511, *Scriptores Aethiopici* 88] (Leuven, 1989). The text of Jub 5:21–22 reads as follows: “(21) He ordered Noah to make himself an ark in order to save himself from the flood waters. (22) Noah made an ark in every respect as he had ordered him during the *twenty-seventh* jubilee of years, in the fifth week, during its fifth year”.

²⁷ The text of Jub 5:23–28 reads as follows: “(23) He entered (it) during its sixth (year), in the second month—on the first of the second month until the sixteenth. He and all that we brought to him entered the ark. The Lord closed it from outside on the seventeenth in the evening. (24) The Lord opened the seven floodgates of heaven and the openings of the sources of the great deep—there being seven openings in number. (25) The floodgates began to send water down from the sky for 40 days and 40 nights, while the sources of the deep brought waters up until the whole earth was full of water. (26) The waters increased on the earth; the waters rose 15 cubits above every high mountain. The ark rose above the earth and moved about on the surface of the waters. (27) The waters remained standing on the surface of the earth for five months—150 days. (28) Then the ark came to rest on the summit of Lubar, one of the mountains of Ararat”.

²⁸ The text of Jub 5:29–32 reads as follows: “(29) During the fourth month the sources of the great deep were closed, and the floodgates of heaven were held back. On the first of the seventh month all the sources of the earth’s deep places were opened, and the waters started to go down into the deep below. (30) On the first of the tenth month the summits of the mountains became visible. (31) The waters dried up from above the earth in the fifth week, in its seventh year. On the seventeenth day of the second month the earth was dry. (32) On its twenty-seventh (day) he opened the ark and sent from it the animals, birds, and whatever moves about”.

²⁹ The imperfection of God in his work is unacceptable. Therefore he cannot accept the divine repentance, for his foreknowledge would preclude actions which he would later regret. LXX Gen 6:6 also avoids mentioning repentance. God only reflects that he has made man. Cf. A. Salvesen, *Symmachus in the Pentateuch* [JSSM 15] (Manchester, 1991) 34–36.

³⁰ The significance of the structure and measurements does not interest the author

load it (Gen 6:18b-21; 7:1-4) and the order to leave the ark (Gen 8:15-17). The omission of the embarkation results in the omission of the mention of the number of animals and the reference to clean and unclean animals. In addition, the mention of the destruction of all flesh (Gen 7:21-23), and the opening of the window and the sending of the raven and the dove (Gen 8:6-13) are also omitted.

This overall comparison between the story of the Flood in Jubilees and in Genesis shows that the actual story is severely shortened in Jubilees. This shortening is a combination of omission and variation. The preceding motivation and the following reaction to the story are greatly enlarged. This enlargement is a combination of addition and variation.

3. *An Analysis of Some of the Differences between Genesis 6:1-8:19 and Jubilees 5:1-32*

Harmonization of the Story

The actual story of the Flood is not only greatly shortened, the author of the Book of Jubilees also tries to make the story more coherent. He avoids doublets, and sometimes he adapts the sequence of events. This is a form of harmonization, which is one of the most important characteristics of early Jewish exegesis.³¹ The totality of the Bible is the word of God and therefore perfect.

In the rendering of the story in Genesis, the events are mixed up. There are some doublets and inconsistencies. The fountains and windows are already opened (7:11), the waters are coming on to the earth from all sides (7:6, 7b, 10, 12, 17a) *before* Noah and his family enter into the ark (which is described twice: 7:7-9 and 7:13-16b) and before God closes it (7:13-16c). The author of Jubilees puts forward a strong logic in his description of the sequence of the events. He avoids doublets and inconsistencies. Firstly, the order to build the ark is given (5:21),³² then the order is executed (5:22). Only then does Noah enter (only once) into the ark, and God closes it (5:23). Only when everything and everybody is safely inside the ark, does

of Jubilees. A great deal of attention is paid to the structure and measurements by Philo and others.

³¹ Vermes, *Bible and Midrash*, 69; B. Childs, *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture* (London, 1979) 648-649; cf. Endres, *Biblical Interpretation*, 224.

³² A translation of Jub 5:21-26 is given in notes 26-27.

God open the fountains and windows (5:24), whereafter the flood begins with the coming of the waters (5:25) and the prevailing of the waters upon the earth (5:26).

Dating the Events

The author of Jubilees not only shortens and harmonizes the story, he also puts a great deal of emphasis on the dating of the story. The biblical version already pays a lot of attention to this (Gen 7:4, 6, 10–12, 17; 8:3–6, 10, 12, 13–14), but in Jubilees the chronology seems to be given even more emphasis. The author omits much of the story of the Flood, but he does take up and elaborate the chronology. I refer to Jub 5:22b, 23a, 23c, 25a, 27, 29a, 29c, 30a, 30b, 31a, 31b, 32a.

In Jub 6, it is revealed why the author puts so much emphasis on dates in his description of the story of the Flood. In Jub 6, which describes the consequences of the Flood, it becomes clear that Noah plays an important part in the determination and celebration of the festivals in the religious calendar, a function typical of a priest. Noah is the first to celebrate the feast of Shebuot on the day of the establishment of the covenant (6:17–18). The calendar of 364 days is also inferred back to Noah. In this kind of year, four intercalary days occur (12 months of 30 days + four days) which must be celebrated as annual festivals. These four days occur one at the beginning of each quarter: the first of the first month, the first of the fourth month, the first of the seventh month and the first of the tenth month. The text states that Noah ordained them as feast days because they were a reminder to him of important events of the Flood:

- Jub 6:24a Noah ordained them as festivals for himself throughout the history of eternity
 6:24b with the result that through them he had a reminder.
 6:25a *On the first of the first month* he was told to make the ark,³³
 6:25b and on it the earth became dry (cf. Jub 5:30b), he opened (it), and saw the earth.
 6:26a *On the first of the fourth month* the openings of the depths of the abyss below were closed (cf. Jub 5:29a).
 6:26b *On the first of the seventh month* all the openings of the earth's depths were opened, and the water began to go down into them (cf. Jub 5:29c).

³³ This event is not mentioned in Jub 5:21.

- 6:27a *On the first of the tenth month* the summits of the mountains
became visible, (cf. Jub 5:30a)³⁴
6:27b and Noah was very happy.

The insertion of these dates in the description of the story of the Flood (Jub 5:29–32) seems not to have been caused by a philological difficulty requiring specific exegesis, nor by a lack of sufficient details, nor by a contradiction of a passage by other passages, nor by unacceptable meanings. Therefore, it seems to be a clear example of “applied exegesis”.³⁵ The addition of the dates to the story of the Flood is a justification of the calendar of the author which was not generally accepted. By attributing the calendar to Noah, the author of Jubilees tries to give this calendar more authority.

However, it seems to me that with the insertion of the dates, the author of Jubilees is also trying to strengthen the coherence of the story of the Flood. The insertion might be another example of harmonization. The fountains and windows were closed (5:29ab), then the mouths of the depths of the earth were opened (5:29c) in order that the waters could subside (5:29d), after which the heads of the mountains (Jub 5:30a) and the earth appeared (5:30b), the waters dried up from upon the earth (5:31a) and, finally, the land was dry (5:31b). In Genesis, the sequence of these events is described much more incoherently. I only refer here to Gen 8:13–14. In v. 13 it is stated that “in the first month, on the first day, the waters were dried from off the earth”, and “behold, the ground was dry” (וַהֲנִיחַ תָּרְבוּ פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה), whereas in v. 14 it is stated that “on the twenty-seventh day of the month, the earth was dry” (יִשְׁכַּח הָאָרֶץ). Although the phrases “the ground was dry” (תָּרְבוּ פְּנֵי הָאֲדָמָה) and “the earth was dry” (יִשְׁכַּח הָאָרֶץ) are not exactly the same, it seems that the juxtaposition of both phrases posed a problem of incoherence for the author of Jubilees which he tries to solve: first, the land appeared, then the water dried up completely from upon the earth, and only then was the land really dry.

³⁴ This event is also dated in the text of Gen 8:5a.

³⁵ For the expression “applied exegesis” see: G. Vermes, “Bible and Midrash. Early Old Testament Exegesis”, in *Post-Biblical Jewish Studies* [SJLA 8] (Leiden, 1975) 60–91 (esp. 80–90); cf. G. Vermes, “Genesis 1–3 in Post-Biblical Hebrew and Aramaic Literature before the Mishnah”, *JJS* 43 (1992) 221–225 (esp. 222).

The Flood and the Watchers

Finally, I would like to examine some elements of rewriting in the first part of Jubilees 5. To some extent Jub 5:1–19 can be considered as a rendering of Gen 6:1–12. However, there are not only resemblances between Jub 5:1–19 and Gen 6:1–12, but also many differences. I refer to the omissions (e.g. Gen 6:4ab, part of 4d–5a, 6ab, part of 7b, 7c, 9–11), the extensive additions (Jub 5:2b–d, 6–7, 9–19), variations in sequence (Gen 6:3 and Jub 5:8; Gen 6:12 and Jub 5:3) and other differences. In fact only Jub. 5:1–5 is a re-writing of the text of Gen 6:1–12. In Jub 5:6–18, hardly any parallels with the text of Genesis 6 can be found. The only exception is Jub 5:8 which is a literal rendering of Gen 6:3 which is taken out of its immediate context.

I shall not be able to discuss all the differences between Gen 6:1–12 and Jub 5:1–19, but rather shall confine myself to two differences, viz., the combination of elements of the Flood Story with elements of the story of the Watchers, and the dislocation of Gen 6:3.

Firstly, as mentioned above, in the Book of Jubilees (Jub 5:1–19) the first part of the story of the Flood, the motivation for it (cf. Gen 6:5–12), is connected to the story of the intercourse of the sons of God with the daughters of men (cf. Gen 6:1–4). The dating of the story of the sons of God (Jub 5:1d: “in a certain year of this jubilee”) refers back to the date in the genealogy on Noah (Jub 4:33). The text of Genesis is altered and rewritten as a story of the imprisonment of the Watchers and the destruction of their children, combined with elements of the Flood narrative to portray the consequences of lawlessness.³⁶ Form-critical and stylistic arguments point to the division of Gen 6:1–8:19 into two parts, Gen 6:1–4 on the one hand, and Gen 6:5–8:19 on the other.³⁷ However, the fact that the story of the sons of God precedes the story of the Flood immediately makes it easy for any reader, also for the author of the Book

³⁶ Cf. Davenport, *The Eschatology*, 47.

³⁷ The text of Gen 6:1–4 is marked off from its literary context. I refer to the very beginning of the text וַיְהִי כִּי הִחַל הָאָדָם (“When the children of men began to multiply”). The words וַיְהִי and הִחַל indicate a new beginning. When “sons of God” appears in the Bible the story of Gen 6:1–4 unfolds itself, when they disappear the story ends. Cf. E. van Wolde, “Een kleurrijke miniatuur over Gods zonen en mensendochteren (Genesis 6,1–4)”, in C. Verdegaal – W. Weren (eds.) *Stromen uit Eden. Genesis 1–11 in bijbel, joodse exegese en moderne literatuur* (Boxtel, 1992) 29–41 (esp. 30).

of Jubilees, to interrelate both stories. In the *biblical* allusions to the story of the Flood,³⁸ the connection between both stories is not found, but in *post-biblical* early Jewish literature it occurs frequently.

In Jub 5:1–19, the Flood seems to be, in the first place, the judgement on man and animal (v. 4, 19). Of the people, only Noah and his offspring are rescued (v. 5, 19). However, this judgement is connected with other judgements, on the angels (v. 6 and v. 10–11: they are bound in the depths of the earth until the day of the great judgement), and on the giants (v. 7–9: the sending of the sword so that each one might kill his fellow). In the Damascus Document (2:14–21), too, which was written not much later than the Book of Jubilees, both judgements stand side by side, comparable with Jub 5:1–19.³⁹

And now, my sons, listen to me and I shall open your eyes so that you can see and understand the deeds of God, so that you can choose what he is pleased with and repudiate what he hates, so that you can walk perfectly on all his paths and not follow after the thoughts of a guilty inclination and lascivious eyes. For many wandered off for these matters; brave heroes yielded on account of them, from ancient times until now. For having walked in the stubbornness of their hearts the Watchers of the heavens fell; on account of it they were caught, for they did not follow the precepts of God. And their sons, whose height was like that of cedars and whose bodies were like mountains, fell. All flesh which there was in the dry earth decayed and became as if it had never been, for having realized their desires and failing to keep their creator's precepts, until his wrath flared up against them (CD 2:14–21).⁴⁰

Van Selms, *Genesis*, 103; Gispén, *Genesis*, 214; Westermann also treats the two parts as separate entities, see Westermann, *Genesis*, 491–517 and 518–614. In contrast, Wenham is of the opinion that Gen 6:1–8 forms a unity which functions as the counterpart of Gen 5:1–32. See G.J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15* [WBC] (Waco TX, 1987) 135–147 (esp. 136–138).

³⁸ Explicit references to the story of the Flood can be found in Isa 54:9–10 and Ezek 14:12–23 (esp. vv. 14, 20). Allusions to the Flood can be found in Ps 29:10 and Job 22:15–20. The motif of the Flood can possibly be found in Isa 24:1, 4–5, 18; 26:20–21; Neh 1:8; Ps 18:16; 65:5–8; 69:1; 89:10; 93:3; Dan 9:26. Cf. J.P. Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation of Noah and the Flood in Jewish and Christian Literature* (Leiden, 1968) 7–9.

³⁹ Cf. also the Wisdom of Solomon 14:6 and 2 Peter 2:4–8 which must be dated in the 2nd century CE (“For if God did not spare the angels when they sinned, but cast them into hell and committed them to pits of nether gloom to be kept until the judgement; if he did not spare the ancient world, but preserved Noah, a herald of righteousness, with seven other persons, when he brought a flood upon the world of the ungodly”).

⁴⁰ The translation is by F. García Martínez, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Translated. The Qumran Texts in English* (Leiden, 1994) 34.

In other texts, Noah on the one hand, and the sons of God, called the (fallen) angels or the Watchers, on the other, are put into sharp contrast. In the anticipation of the Flood in Jub 4:22–24, and in the reference back to the Flood in Jub 7:20–25, the Flood is seen as the judgement of God because of the behaviour of the sons of God (called the Watchers):

For it was on account of these three things [viz., fornication, pollution and injustice] that the Flood was on the earth. Since (it was) due to fornication that the Watchers had illicit intercourse—apart from the mandate of their authority—with the daughters of men. When they took for themselves wives of them whomever they choose they committed the first (acts) of uncleanness (Jub 7:21).

In other early Jewish writings, too, there is the view that the Flood is the punishment for the transgressions of the Watchers, e.g. the *Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs* (2nd century BCE):⁴¹

Likewise [as Sodom] the Watchers departed from nature's order; the Lord pronounced a curse on them at the Flood. On their account he ordered that the earth be without dweller or produce (Testament of Naphtali 3:5).

Considering the fact that the connection between the story of the Flood and the story of the Watchers is also found elsewhere in early Jewish literature, the connection in Jub 5:1–19 might be traditional. One piece of evidence can be added. It is striking that the passage Jub 5:4–12, in which the judgements on the men, angels and giants are mentioned, runs very much parallel to 1 En 10:1–17. To some extent 1 Enoch 6–11, like Jub 5:1–19, can be considered as an elaboration of Gen 6:1–4.⁴² Therefore the parallel between Jub 5:4–12 and 1 En 10:1–17 is interesting.

Jubilees 5:4–12

5:4–5, 19 announcement of the
Flood and rescue of
Noah

1 Enoch 10

10:1–3 announcement of the
Flood by Uriel and rescue
of Noah

⁴¹ In 3 Macc 2:4 (1st century BCE) it is written as follows: “You [God] have destroyed men for their wicked deeds in the past, among them giants relying on their own strength and self-confidence, upon whom you brought an immeasurable flood of water”. Cf. also Luke 17:26–27 (“As it was in the days of Noah, so will it be in the days of the Son of man. They ate, they drank, they married, they were given in marriage, until the day when Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all”).

⁴² See the literal rendering of Gen 6:1 2, 4 in 1 Enoch 6:1 2; 7:1 2.

(Table cont.)

5:6	judgement against the angels (1)	10:4–6, 8	Raphael proclaims the judgement to Asasel (one of the Watchers)
5:7–9	judgement against the giants; they kill one another by the sword	10:9–10	Gabriel lets the giants destroy one another (cf. 1 En 14:6: “by the sword”)
5:10–11	judgement against the angels (2)	10:11–15	Michael announces to Shemihasa (one of the other Watchers) the judgement
5:12	new nature	10:7, 16–17	new earth

The announcement of the Flood and the rescue of Noah are found in both texts, followed by the judgement against the angels, the judgement against the giants, then the judgement against the angels again, and finally the new nature. It is particularly striking that the doubling of the judgement against the angels runs parallel with the judgement against Asasel followed by the judgement against Shemihasa. In spite of the structural parallel between the content of both texts, I doubt that the addition of Jub 5:(4)6–19 is derived directly from 1 Enoch 6–11. There are too many differences in the wording. Besides, according to Jubilees it is God himself who sent the angels to the earth (Jub 5:6; cf. Jub 4), whereas in 1 Enoch 6–11 these angels descend out of heaven in an act of rebellion. Possibly the writer of 1 Enoch 6–11 and the writer of Jub 5:4–12 have taken material from the same tradition, but they reconstruct it each in their own way. This tradition is possibly the tradition which is identified by some as the so-called “Book of Noah”.⁴³

Genesis 6:3

As has already been mentioned, Jub 5:8 is a rendering of Gen 6:3, which is taken out of its immediate context. It is nearly identical to LXX Gen 6:3. The Hebrew text of Gen 6:3 contains certain difficulties, and the rendering of the biblical verse in Jub 5:8 reflects some of the difficulties of this text.

⁴³ F. García Martínez, *Qumran and Apocalyptic. Studies on the Aramaic Texts from Qumran* [STDJ IX] 24–44. Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation*, 14–15, is very sceptical about the existence of a lost book of Noah.

As far as the form and the content are concerned, Gen 6:3 is odd in its context. It falls outside the scope of the narrative Gen 6:1–2, 4. Gen 6:4 is a continuation of Gen 6:2. The statement of God in Gen 6:3 is a reflection on what he has decided. The statement consists of a negative decree (viz., “my spirit shall not . . . forever”) and a positive one (“His days shall be a hundred and twenty years”). The judgement of God concerns people. This does not fit very well in the context, since the “sons of God” are responsible for what happened in Gen 6:1–2, 4. However, in the biblical text, nothing is said about their punishment nor about the guilt of people. In the history of the interpretation, the meaning of the phrase “his days shall be a hundred and twenty years” is regarded as referring either to the maximum life span of mankind⁴⁴ or to the life span of the generation before the Flood.⁴⁵

With regard to this problem, it is striking to see that in the text of Jubilees the rewriting of Gen 6:3 is dislocated and joined to the judgement on the giants. As far as I can see, this is a reflection of the problem that, in the biblical text, nothing is said about the punishment of the sons of God nor about the guilt of people. By not referring the statement of Gen 6:3 to man in general, but rather to a specific kind of people, viz. the mortal offspring of the sons of God and the daughters of men, the judgement is more adequate. Moreover, this means that the author of Jubilees does not interpret the “hundred and twenty years” as the maximum life span of mankind in general, but as the life span of the generation before the Flood, that means the giants. Besides, the life span of a hundred and twenty years does not fit in the context of Genesis, since the life span of the Patriarchs exceeds a hundred and twenty years. By transposing the text and by referring it to the generation before the flood, viz., the giants, the author of Jubilees has solved this problem.⁴⁶

The second problem in the Hebrew text of Gen 6:3 is the meaning of לֹא יָרֵד. According to the lexicons, this word should be derived

⁴⁴ Westermann, *Genesis*, 507.

⁴⁵ E.g. LXX Gen 6:3 (“My spirit shall not abide in *those* men for ever”), and the Targums (e.g. Targum Onkelos: “And the Lord said: This wicked generation shall not endure before me forever, because they are flesh, and their deeds are evil; let an extension be granted to them for 120 years, (to see) if they will repent”).

⁴⁶ In the text of 1 Enoch 10:9–10 it is stated that the giants hope to live an eternal life, at least they hope to live five hundred years. By saying that their days shall be a hundred and twenty years, the author of Jubilees interprets the dislocated Gen 6:3 as a *punishment* against them.

from the root דן , but this root is not explained.⁴⁷ In modern commentaries, considerable effort has been put into the explanation of the word, but no consensus exists.⁴⁸ In the old translations דן is either read as a form of the root דן (“to judge”)⁴⁹ or interpreted as a form of דן/ידן (“to dwell, to remain”).⁵⁰ The author of Jubilees interprets דן as “to dwell”.⁵¹ The same interpretation can be found in LXX and later in 4Q252.⁵² However, the author of Jubilees shows implicitly with the addition of Jub 5:6–18 that דן can be interpreted as a form of the verb דן , which means “execute judgement, contend with”.⁵³

The third problem in the biblical text is the meaning of בשנם . In the Masoretic manuscripts, there is a variation between בשנם (with *patah*) and בשנם (with *qames*). In the first reading the word seems to be a construction of the preposition ב , the relative particle ש , and the particle נם (also). This construction is very difficult to translate properly, because ש does not occur as a relative particle elsewhere in the Pentateuch, whereas נם is also difficult in this context.⁵⁴ In the second reading, the word seems to be a construction of the preposition ב and a word derived either from the root שננ (“commit error, ‘sin’”) or from the root שנה (“stray, err, commit sin”).⁵⁵ The translation is in both cases: “because they sinned”. I am not sure whether the meaning of בשנם was a problem for the author of Jubilees.

⁴⁷ E.g., L. Koehler – W. Baumgartner (eds.), *Hebräisches und Aramäisches Lexicon zum Alten Testament*, I (Leiden, 1967) 208.

⁴⁸ Cf. A. Speiser, “YDWN, Gen 6,3”, *JBL* 75 (1956) 126–129; H. Gunkel, *Genesis* (Göttingen, 1966⁷) 55–58; O. Loretz, *Schöpfung und Mythos. Mensch und Welt nach den Anfangskapiteln der Genesis* [SBS 32] (Stuttgart, 1968) 42–43; Westermann, *Genesis*, 506–507.

⁴⁹ The root דן (“to judge”) is read by Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and Neofiti (“None of the evil generations to arise in the future will be judged by the order of judgements”); cf. Pseudo-Philo, *Liber Antiquitatum Biblicarum* 3:2 (“My spirit shall not judge all forever”).

⁵⁰ E.g., LXX (“My spirit shall not abide”), and Targum Onkelos (“This wicked generation shall not endure before me”).

⁵¹ Cf. Lewis, *A Study of the Interpretation*, 28 (note 4); J. Bowker, *The Targums and Rabbinic Literature. An Introduction to Jewish Interpretations of Scripture* (Cambridge, 1969) 155.

⁵² I think that לא ידן in the commentary 4Q252 reflects an *interpretation* of the Hebrew text of Gen 6:3, and not a rendering of that text.

⁵³ In contrast, Bowker, *ibidem*, writes: “LXX reads: ‘My spirit will not rest in . . .’, which is also the way in which Jub v. 8 understood it, despite its long paragraph on judgement”.

⁵⁴ Cf. Westermann, *Genesis*, 507.

⁵⁵ Infinitivus constructus with suffix 3 plural masculine.

The phrase *בשר הוא בשנם* is rendered as in the LXX: “For *they are* flesh”. The construction *בשנם* is read as “for”, whereas the plural is used instead of the singular.

4. *Conclusions*

In this article I have tried to show some elements of the process of interpretation in the Book of Jubilees at a time when the boundaries of the Hebrew Bible were not yet fixed. The comparison between the relevant parts of Jubilees 5 and Genesis 6–8 has shown that the author of Jubilees sometimes reproduces the text of Genesis quite literally, but that he also changes his model in other places. He omits certain phrases and passages and adds others, while also modifying passages that run parallel. I have tried to show that the author of Jubilees is primarily a careful reader of the biblical text. This text poses some difficulties for him (e.g. doublets, incoherencies, unacceptable meanings, a lack of sufficient details). With his rewriting he tries to solve these problems. Harmonization is a special characteristic of this rewriting. Harmonization seems to control much of the rewriting, viz. the attempt to make the actual story of the Flood more coherent, the dating of the events, and the rendering of Gen 6:3. Many of the alterations in the rewriting of Jubilees, therefore, are caused by exegetical problems in the text of Genesis. The combination of the judgement on the angels and the giants with the Flood, viz. the addition of Jub 5:6–19, seems not to be caused by exegetical problems but by current interpretations of the text. Finally, the introduction of elements of the calendar of 364 days in the story of the Flood might betray a *Tendenz* of Jubilees, the introduction of a dogmatically sensitive issue.

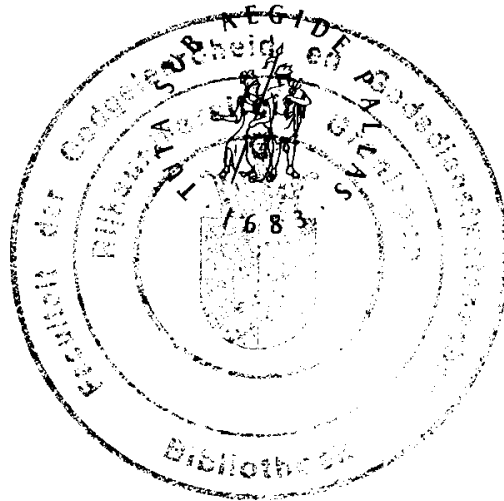
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